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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to demonstrate a correlation between college students' moral stage level and their recognition of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action. Jurgen Habermas has posited the existence of formal-pragmatic presuppositions that are assumed in every act of communicative behavior. Lawrence Kohlberg has posited empirically verifiable stages of moral development among humans. Very little, if any, empirical research has been conducted to examine the existence of formal-pragmatics presuppositions or the link between these presuppositions and moral stage development. Using the Defining Issues Test (DIT) and the newly-developed Stroud Formal Pragmatic Presupposition Awareness Instrument (SFPPAI), this study fails to discover any significant link between respondent's moral stage placement and his or her awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action. Positive correlations, however, are found between class standing and SFPPAI score, class standing and DIT score, and age and DIT score. Contains 47 references. The SFPPAI and question correspondences for the SFPPAI are attached. (RS)

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Universal Elements in Human Nature: The Putative Connection between Moral Development and Formal-Pragmatic Presupposition Awareness.

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Abstract:

This study attempts to demonstrate a correlation between college students' moral stage level and their recognition of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action. Jurgen Habermas has posited the existence of formal-pragmatic presuppositions that are assumed in every act of communicative behavior. Lawrence Kohlberg has posited empirically verifiable stages of moral development among humans. Very little, if any, empirical research has been conducted to examine the existence of formal-pragmatics presuppositions or the link between these presuppositions and moral stage development. Using the Defining Issues Test (DIT) and the newly-developed Formal Pragmatic Presupposition Awareness Instrument (FPPAI), this study fails to discover any significant link between respondent's moral stage placement and his or her awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action. Positive correlations, however, are found between class standing and FPPAI score, class standing and DIT score, and age and DIT score.

Universal Elements in Human Nature: The Putative Connection between Moral Development and Formal-Pragmatic Presupposition Awareness.

Introduction

Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory has revolutionized the study of cognitive moral development, which has had enormous effects on educational pedagogy (Day & Tappan, 1996). This theoretical trend toward universalization is also present in the work of Jurgen Habermas, specifically his arguments for the presence of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action (McCarthy, 1978). While the issues of moral development and communication have obvious overlaps, there is little if any research that attempts to empirically connect the ideas contained in moral development theory and presuppositions of communication. This study attempts to demonstrate a link between college students' moral stage level and their recognition of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action. This study can shed further light on the role formal-pragmatic assumptions should play in college education.

Contemporary critical-theoretical traditions in philosophy have had only minor influence on developmental psychology, even though they can bring some important meta-theoretical contributions to areas such as moral development (Teo, 1997). This study attempts to empirically connect the insights of Habermas's "formal-pragmatics" to Kohlberg's moral development theory (as espoused by the "neo-Kohlbergian" school) and in doing so, expand the weak foundation of literature on this paradigmatic crossroads.

This study would allow for a verification of consistency among moral judgments of individual subjects. This verification is important because Kohlberg's theory is one of the most important psychological theories since those of B.F. Skinner (Flanagan, 1982).
This study will create and test a new instrument for measuring a subject's awareness of her formal-pragmatic presuppositions. This instrument will be the first of its kind and will allow for empirical confirmation of Habermas's metatheoretical speculations.

Like childhood moral education (Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, in press), college has been indicated in scholarly literature and in common knowledge as positively affecting student's moral disposition (Pascarella, 1997). This study allows for confirmation of this development and for the additional development of formal-pragmatic presupposition awareness. The following sections discuss the theoretical framework of this study, a review of the relevant literature, presentation of the hypotheses and research questions, examination of the methodology to be used, presentation of results, discussion of findings, limitations to this study, and directions for future research.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories underlie this study: Kohlberg's theory of moral development, as reformulated by the "neo-Kohlbergian" research (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999), and Habermas's theory of formal-pragmatics. Kohlberg's theory of moral development posits that

> there are five to six stages of moral development that define the progression form moral immaturity to moral maturity. In general, humans proceed from egocentric orientations in which simple pleasure and pain are the main considerations, to contractual, altruistic, and principled orientations. (Flanagan, p. 150, 1991)

These stages are structured wholes that follow an irreversible sequence toward universalized justification for moral norms (Rehg, 1997).

Habermas's theory of formal-pragmatics is based upon his program of communicative action (McCarthy, 1978). As humans engage in the exchange of linguistic speech acts that are oriented toward reaching understanding, certain presuppositions are implicitly agreed to hold (Habermas, 1984). These are basic assumptions that are necessary for the goal of reaching understanding through speech acts.

The theories of both Kohlberg and Habermas are oriented toward universal elements among humanity; respectively the capacity for growth toward universal justification for moral norms and the universal presuppositions for communicating about anything (such as morality). The theoretical link to the problem is that in communicating (actually or potentially) about moral dilemmas, the subjects can either do so with or without knowledge of the formal-pragmatic presuppositions of their communicative actions.

Review of the Literature

Theoretical literature

Very little, if any, empirical research has been conducted to examine the existence of formal-pragmatics presuppositions or the link between these presuppositions and moral stage development. Kohlberg's stages are summarized by Pascarella (1997) in the following manner:

> Level 1 (Stages 1 and 2): Pre-Conventional Moral Reasoning. Moral reasoning is highly egocentric in that it is based on the person's concerns for his or her own interests and for those of specific others the individual might care about.
>
> Level 2 (Stages 3 and 4): Conventional Moral Reasoning. Moral judgments are guided by obedience to rules and meeting the expectations of others, particularly those in positions of authority.
>
> Level 3 (Stages 5 and 6): Post-Conventional Moral Reasoning. A view of morality as a set of universal principles for making choices among alternative courses of action that

would be upheld by any rational moral individual…a central emphasis is on choosing the most just arrangement for individuals within society. (p. 48).

Objections to Kohlberg's stages/levels have been made by Gilligan (1982). She criticized Kohlberg's theoretical bias toward the male "ethic of justice" as opposed to the female "ethic of care" (Garmon, Basinger, Gregg, & Gibbs, 1996). She argues that this leads to the placing of women in "lesser developed" stages/levels.

In extending Kohlberg's theory of moral development, the "Minnesota Center" relies on schema research in order to illuminate important features. Rest, Thoma, and Narvaez (1999a) indicate that "schemas are understood to be general structures residing in long term memory….Schemas are evoked (or 'activated') by current stimulus configurations that resemble previous stimuli"(p. 1.). Moral judgment ability is placed within three schemas: the Primary Interests schema, the Maintaining Norms schema, and the Postconventional schema (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999). These level correlate to the above labeled Levels, 1, 2, and 3, respectively. This line of research has "supported [the] basic claim of stage theorists: that moral judgment development is hierarchical and sensitive to specific features of the educational and social world"(Thoma & Rest, 1999). Due to this common similarity of the developmental approaches of the "Kohlbergian" and "neo-Kohlbergian" schools, in this paper, this general theory shall be referred to as attributable to its founder, "Kohlberg."

Habermas posits several formal-pragmatic presuppositions that are necessary for participants to assume in order for their action to truly be oriented toward reaching understanding (communicative action, as opposed to strategic action) (Habermas, 1996).
These presuppositions are universal in that they must be assumed by all involved and potentially involved in the discussion. If these are not assumed, then the action is strategic (Habermas, 1984); the use of these utterances is not oriented toward reaching understanding on an intersubjective level, but instead focuses on instrumentally using the other communicators toward some objective (Habermas, 1993).
Cooke (1994) enumerates these formal-pragmatic presuppositions:

> Participants necessarily presuppose not only that all taking part are using the same linguistic expressions in the same way [consistency], that no relevant opinions have been suppressed or excluded [inclusivity], that no force is exerted except that of the better argument [non-coercion], and that everyone is motivated only by the desire for truth [truth orientation] but also that no validity claim is in principle exempt from the critical evaluation of the participants [criticism]. (p. 34).

The utterances that are used in communicative action are labeled "validity claims" (Habermas, 1984) because they claim to be a valid representation of some facet of the world. Cooke (1994) indicates "Validity claims are always raised by flesh-and-blood individuals in actual socio-cultural and historical situations, but they always at the same time also transcend all given contexts" (p. 35). Validity claims are universal because they embody universal presuppositions.

A possible link between Kohlberg's and Habermas's theory could come from their respective universal nature; Kohlberg's moral judgments are universal (Lourenco, 1996) and Habermas's formal-pragmatic presuppositions are universal (McCarthy, 1978). Lapsley (1996) points out that Kohlberg sees the moral point of view as a universalizable point of view. Theoretical connects between this point of view and communicative action has been made by Habermas (1996). Puka (1996) confirms that Kohlberg views moral judgment stages as abstract and universal.

Levenson and Crumpler (1996) argue that the post-conventional individual will look for universal justification for moral norms. This has parallels to Maslow's "self-actualized" person. Habermas (1993) links abstract portrayals of the self in relation to others to formal-pragmatic issues.

Empirical Literature

Kohlberg and Nisan (1982) conducted a longitudinal and cross-sectional study of moral development involving children in Turkey. Their results supported Kohlberg's earlier claims (Kohlberg, 1984) that moral development possessed a structural universality in humans. The Turkish children fit the moral stages and followed the predicted development pattern in both studies.

Carlo, Koller, Da Silva, Frohlich, and Eisenberg (1996) examined "prosocial moral reasoning" (reasoning about Kohlbergian moral dilemmas) in Brazilian youths and found that the results were similar to American adolescents. The differences in age and gender were similar to American differences.

Wark and Krebs (1996) examined Gilligan's (1982) objections to Kohlberg in their study; their findings did not support Gilligan's charge to stage/level bias against females. They found that "Females were more consistent than males in moral stage; males were more consistent in moral orientation" (p. 220). Garmon, Basinger, Gregg, & Gibbs (1996) also found that Gilligan's charge of stage bias was not correct, but that there was some support for moral developmental differences between males and females.

A study conducted by Teo, Becker, and Edelstein (1995) failed to confirm Kohlberg's idea of totally consistent stage structure that each individual occupies, but did support the general idea of Kohlberg's stage ordering. Using dilemma interviews, Langford (1997) found that the theory of Gibbs (Gibbs, Basinger, & Fuller, 1991) is inadequate in explaining the moral development of individuals. He did confirm that the basic tenets of Kohlberg's theory do explain moral development among humans (especially the existence of post-conventional moral stages).

In general, Pascarella (1997) indicates that Kohlberg's theory is the dominant moral development theory being debated and confirmed in the literature. Also, Pascarella (1997) points out that current research has found a positive correlation between level of principled moral reasoning (increasingly higher stages of Kohlberg's theory) and community involvement, ethical behavior, civic responsibility, and heightened performance. Pascarella (1997) argues that "The weight of evidence also suggests that a major (if not *the* major) change that takes place during college is that students shift from using moral reasoning that conceded to societal authority to using reasoning that is based on the application of universal moral principles" (p.49-50). Modest support also exists for the effect of college on an individual's moral development.

Narvaez, Getz, Thoma, and Rest (1999) found that moral judgment could not be equated or reduced to measurement of cultural ideology. Various critiques of the political nature of placement on Kohlberg's levels was found to be empirically unfounded by Thoma, Barnett, Rest, and Narvaez (1999). Other studies support standard measures of moral judgment development as being irreducible to political attitude and/or verbal ability (Thoma, Narvaez, & Rest, 1998; Thoma, Narvaez, Rest, & Derryberry, in press). Moral judgment is a supported phenomena; Rest, Thoma, and Narvaez (1999b) concludes with the position that moral judgment, while related to issues of political outlook and ideology, is not fundamentally reducible to these entities. Kohlberg's basic theory of moral judgment development has been empirically supported in multitudes of studies and in various ways.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Hypothesis 1 shall indicate that higher levels of *awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action will be connected with increasing stages of moral development.*

Awareness is conceptually defined as the ability to identify one's use of or dependence on an entity, quality, etc. *Formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action* are the rules and maxims that are universally and implicitly assumed to be in use by all participants involved in discourse, conversation, and all other forms of communication (Habermas, 1998). *Increasing*

stages of moral development occurs as one ascends the levels indicated by Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

The rationale for this hypothesis is that since formal-pragmatic presuppositions deal with the universal nature of communication and validity claims (Habermas, 1984), it is reasonable to assume that individuals who recognize the universal nature of their communicative utterances should also seek universal justification behind their moral judgments. The idea is that certain individuals are more "attuned" to the universal similarity they share in their communicative and moral practices with others.

Hypothesis 2 shall indicate *that college standing will be positively correlated with recognition of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action and DIT score.*

College standing shall be defined as one's year in college (i.e. freshman, junior, etc.). *Formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action* are rules and maxims that are universally and implicitly assumed to be in use by all participants involved in discourse, conversation, and all other forms of communication (Habermas, 1998). Respondent score to the DIT shall be understood as in the above hypothesis.

This hypothesis is advanced because previous research has found that college education is a major cause of increased principled moral reasoning ability (higher location on Kohlberg's stages). One would expect a similar connection between more time spent in college and an increased awareness of the universal assumptions that support our communicative practices.

Research Question 1 is *how does gender affect one's recognition of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action?*

Formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action shall be defined in an identical fashion to the above hypotheses. Gender shall be determined by the subject's personal choice based upon the sex-based dichotomy of male/female.

Past studies and theory (Gilligan, 1982) have indicated that women score differently on Kohlberg's stages of moral development different than men. Since issues of communicative presumptions seem to be slightly different from outright moral judgments, it will be interesting to see if any gender-based distinction arises.

Research Question 2 asks *how does gender correlate with different stage scoring on Kohlberg's theory of moral development?*

Conceptual Definitions shall be the same as indicated previously.

Past studies have indicated a potential bias that Kohlberg's scoring system might have against female approaches to solving moral dilemmas (Gilligan, 1982). The results of this study

could be analyzed to see if the current trend of disconfirming Gilligan's "strong bias argument" should continue with empirical support (Garmon, Basinger, Gregg, & Gibbs, 1996).

Methodology

The method to be used in this study will be the administration of a survey questionnaire. This instrument shall be self-administered in a classroom setting. This is the best method to use because it most effectively balances issues of description, sample size, cost, time, and personnel. Since it is self-administered, students can complete this instrument after it is handed to them; there will be no need for interviewers and time-consuming personal interviews. Additionally, its ease of delivery allows for this instrument to be administered on a large scale; the sample size can be comparatively larger than personal interviews. Costs, personnel needed, and time necessitated should all be minimized with this method of description.

The sample frame to be surveyed is the general community of a private university. This university is chosen out of convenience, and as such, introduces a major factor detracting from the randomness of the sampling method. The sample included various mandatory freshmen and upper-class division general education courses; this helps to ensure a broad spectrum of disciplines and student types in the sample. 164 surveys were returned as usable.

The survey instrument shall be composed of two parts, the Defining Issues Test (DIT) and the Stroud Formal-Pragmatic Presupposition Awareness Instrument (SFPPAI). The first part of the survey instrument, the DIT, measures the independent demographic variables and moral stage placement (Rest, 1979b). This instrument has been used for over 25 years (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, in press). The "short form" version of the DIT (the first three dilemmas) shall be used; this shortening will have only minor impact on the validity and reliably of the results (Rest, Mitchell, & Narvaez, 1999). I have added the demographic variable of "class standing" to Rest's questionnaire. The dependent variable of moral judgment stage shall be measured by six short "moral dilemmas" that are designed to elicit justificatory responses from subjects. The DIT contains the classic elements of moral dilemmas that Kohlberg (1984) uses and has been one of the most tested measures of moral stage development (Pascarella, 1997). Subjects are asked to read a "moral dilemma" story and then asked to rate the importance of various issues in regard to their decision. From these responses a "P Index" is calculated (Rest, Thoma, Narvaez, & Bebeau, 1997). This index correlates to a stage-preference indication, which has been empirically validated by previous research (Rest, Thoma, & Edwards, 1997). Complete information on this instrument is available in Rest (1979b). The dependent variable of formal-pragmatic presupposition awareness will be measured by the first page of the instrument, the Stroud Formal-Pragmatic Presupposition Awareness Instrument (SFPPAI) (see Appendix 1). This instrument is

composed of ten questions that measure the subject's awareness of the five presuppositions of communicative action as explicated by Habermas (1996) and in Cooke (1994):

> Participants necessarily presuppose not only that all taking part are using the same linguistic expressions in the same way [consistency], that no relevant opinions have been suppressed or excluded [inclusivity], that no force is exerted except that of the better argument [non-coercion], and that everyone is motivated only by the desire for truth [truth orientation] but also that no validity claim is in principle exempt from the critical evaluation of the participants [criticism]. (p. 34).

Each of the above presuppositions is assigned two questions on the SFPPAI, one that is stated positively and the other negatively (see Appendix 2). For instance, questions one and three both measure the presupposition of "consistency."

Hypothesis 1 will be answered by comparing the subject's moral stage/level placement (from the DIT) to his or her formal-pragmatic presupposition awareness (from the SFPPAI). The scores on the SFPPAI should register high formal-pragmatic presupposition awareness when the DIT indicates high stage/level placement.

Hypothesis 2 will be answered by comparing the subject's response to the demographic variable "class standing" to his or her scores on the SFPPAI and on the DIT. The higher the class standing (juniors, seniors, etc.), the higher the awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions and moral judgment levels should be.

Research Question 1 will be answered by comparing the subject's response to the demographic variable of "gender" (male/female) to his or her score on the SFPPAI. This question will be answered if any correlation between one's gender and her awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions emerges from the collected data.

Research Question 2 will be answered by comparing the subject's response to the demographic variable of "gender" (male/female) to his or her score on the DIT. This question will be answered if a correlation between one's gender and her moral development stage/level placement emerges from the collected data.

Reliability and Validity

The DIT has shown to be a reliable test of moral judgment development (Pascarella, 1997). The dilemmas it uses are simple and easy to understand. Rest (1979b) examines many reliability issues, and indicates that the DIT produces verifiable results. The short, standardized questions it uses enhance reliability; the chances for one to misunderstand an answer or to respond very differently from other subjects are minimized. The SFPPAI, on the other hand, is a new instrument that has not been rigorously tested. It should produce reliable results due to its

simple wording, double measures, and standardized questions/answers. These factors reduce the amount of uncertainty present in possible subject answers, guaranteeing standardized data.

The DIT appears to have high validity due to its use of standard moral dilemmas. Some have worried about its reliance on face-validity in deciding what dilemmas are "moral" dilemmas, but this worry is not to threatening to the general validity of the DIT. Rest (1979b) indicates that the concepts of criterion-group validity, longitudinal validity, and convergent-divergent correlational validity are all met by the DIT. Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, and Thoma (1999) reference over 400 published studies using the DIT; general measures of reliability and construct validity have been confirmed by these findings. The DIT does appear to measure what its designers intended to measure. The SFPPAI has not had extensive validity studies conducted, but it seems to be valid on its face; all the questions are simple (reducing the traits they could be measuring) and are directed at Cooke's (1994) account of formal-pragmatic presuppositions. Further uses of the SFPPAI should help to confirm its validity.

Results

SFPPAI Internal Reliability

In order to form a unidimensional index of a subject's awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions, the SFPPAI was examined using for internal consistency reliability. A final index was chosen by deleting items which decreased the reliability of the index. After removing four inconsistent items, the alpha reliability stabilized at .5752, an acceptable level for an untested exploratory instrument. Fortunately, at least one of each pair of original items was retained, with one pair remaining intact. These deletions are indicative of a need for question reformulation; however, some sort of measure for each of the five Habermasian presuppositions remained in the final index.

Additionally, the same items were subjected to a principle components factor analysis, using a varimax rotation. When the first factor was examined, it was found that the same set of six items loaded strongly (.4 or greater) on the first factor. These results provided more support for the use of the index.

Hypothesis 1

In regard to the predicted positive correlation between the SFPPAI and the DIT indexes, no statistically significant results were found. A 1-tailed significance test yielded $p=0.112$, with an N of 135 cases used (some DIT responses were found to be invalid because of internal consistency checks within that instrument).

Hypothesis 2

It was hypothesized that class standing would be positively correlated with both SFPPAI and the DIT. This was confirmed for both cases. For the SFPPAI, the correlation was $r = .15$ ($p<.05$, $n = 163$) and for the DIT the correlation was $r = .17$ ($p<.05$, $n = 163$).

Research Question 1

Research question 1 looked at the relationship between a respondent's gender and one's score on the SFPPAI. A t-test was run on the 91 females and 73 male respondents. No significant difference was found on the comparison of the two group means.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 examined the relationship between a respondent's gender and one's score on the DIT (one's P score). Because of the elimination of some respondents due to invalid DIT scores, there were 73 female and 62 male respondents. Again, no significant difference was found between the means for the two groups.

Post Hoc Analysis of Age

Post hoc analysis was done on the effects one's age has on one's score on the SFPPAI and on the DIT. While no statistically significant relationship was found between respondent age and score on the SFPPAI, results were significant in regard to age and P score on the DIT. Out of 134 usable respondents, an age range of 17 years to 23 years old emerges. A positive correlation ($r = .14$, $p<.05$, $n = 134$) was found between age and one's P score.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1

The results of this study are quite surprising, especially given that no statistically significant relationship was found between scores on the DIT and the SFPPAI. As indicated by the literature, a relationship between the ideal presuppositions of communication and one's level of moral thought should be connected at some level. Future research needs to address thus issue. First, revisions need to be undertaken on the SFPPAI; while six items cohered, only one pair survived intact. Thus, some members of these pairs need to be rewritten so as to test what one really wants to test—respondent comprehension of the formal pragmatic presuppositions of communication. Second, the method of self-report might not be viable for testing these presuppositions. Perhaps future versions of the SFPPAI could model the story-statement model of the DIT, with a short description of a communicative situation followed by the ranking of important elements in (or excluded from) this situation. Third, perhaps the nature of the phenomena being studied is fundamentally different. While the study failed to support the relationship between these variables, it does provide impetus to further examine the theoretical

links (or lack thereof) between the presuppositions of communicative action and moral judgment. It may be found that the former is more of an ontological nature and the latter is more of the ethical/moral.

Hypothesis 2

A positive correlation was found between respondent's class standing and score on the SFPPAI. As one's level of education increases, one's ability to recognize the formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communication also increases. Education seems to have some type of effect on one's normative communication expectations, especially in regard to issues of coercion, truth seeking through discourse, the use of reasons, etc. This is a rather positive finding in that it indicates that communication issues are being taught or broached in cross-disciplinary university settings. While these issues might not the topic of any single class, it seems that the process, experience, and education topics of each college year add to one's recognition of these important assumptions.

Research Question 1

No statistically significant difference was found in regard to gender and its influences on respondents' SFPPAI scores. This is an encouraging result in that it supports the idea that the conceptual construction of formal-pragmatic presuppositions is not gender-biased. While Habermas' presuppositions have seen few charges of privileging patriarchal views of communication, this study provides evidence against any empirical relationship that might be posited concerning mis-measurement of females in regard to this instrument. One can claim, with some support, that the process of recognizing the presuppositions one carries into a communicative situation transcends gender; they seem to be a "fact" of one's communicative rationality.

Research Question 2

Moral judgment theory and with it, the DIT, have come under attack by scholars such as Gilligan (1982) for privileging the patriarchal view of morality. These attacks have usually been focused on the "ethics of justice," as opposed to the suppressed "ethics of care" that causes many female respondents to score at a lower level on measures of moral judgment. This study has failed to detect any gender bias in regard to the DIT. This study can be held as a further test of the DIT's ability to reliably score the moral judgment of females and male respondents without any sort of gender difference.

Age Issues

The positive correlation between respondent age and DIT score seems to indicate a separate push for moral development besides educational progression. This result seems to

indicate that the experiences one has while maturing and progressing through college has an effect on one's ability to morally judge situations at a higher level. Whereas progression through educational level opens one's mind to new thoughts and ideas, perhaps age progression allows one to *experience* new people, opinions, moral situations, etc. The cumulative effect of this could be to skew one's moral judgment capacity toward more altruistic and universalized lines of thought due to the first-hand knowledge of other people and other positions in the world besides one's own. Of course this could be a spurious conclusion, since older respondents are also more likely to have higher class standing.

Future Research and Limitations

Future Research

Further study needs to be conducted concerning the development of a more reliable instrument to measure respondent consciousness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions. As mentioned previously, perhaps a new instrument could be modeled after the story-statement form of the DIT, which would enable future research to rely on measures of awareness other than self-report. Ideally, the five presuppositions tested in this study will be formulated and operationalized in such a way as to allow for higher levels of internal reliability. Given this development, future studies can truly be undertaken to examine any type of relationship moral judgment ability may have with this awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communication. Additionally, larger samples from more diverse sample frames can be obtained to allow for a more thorough rendering of DIT results. This would allow a more expansive investigation of the relationship between one's DIT score and one's gender, class standing, and/or age.

Limitations

Obvious limitations to this study include the small sample size, the lack of a representative sampling frame, and the lack of true random sampling techniques. While the sample may be representative of the university at which it was conducted, no guarantee exists that other university or community college populations would not deviate from the results obtained in this investigation. Also potentially troublesome is the novelty of the SFPPAI; this instrument has not been tested as to its validity or reliability, so this study must be considered exploratory research on the construction and performance of such an instrument.

Conclusion

This study has explored the empirical connections that exist between two important conceptual spheres, moral judgment and awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action. While the results of this study were disappointing in that they did not

unearth an empirical relationship between moral judgment ability and awareness of formal pragmatic presuppositions, it has been a useful addition to research activities in this area. The positive correlations between class standing and SFPPAI score, class standing and DIT score, and age and DIT score are interesting insights this study offers. Additionally, exploratory work was undertaken on creating and refining an instrument, the SFPPAI, with which to test respondents' awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communication. Confirmation of previous DIT research has been made that indicates no gender bias in that instrument. This study also failed to detect a gender bias in the SFPPAI. While this study has been a step toward researching a crossroad of theory that has received little research, future study is left the task of clearing up the relationship (or lack thereof) between moral judgment and respondent awareness of formal-pragmatic presuppositions of communicative action.

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Appendix 1: SFPPAI

Please circle the level of your agreement with the statement provided:

1. **Some of your moral convictions are beyond criticism by others.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. **It is important that agreement with your moral judgments be motivated by the strength of your arguments.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. **It's all right if others agree with you because of coercion and intimidation.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. **Everyone's opinion on a moral issue needs to be heard.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. **No claim or argument you ever raise is exempt from reasoned criticism.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. **When dealing with moral dilemmas, it really doesn't matter if others have different meanings for terms such as "right" or "wrong."**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. **Your judgments on moral issues are supported by reasons others should find convincing.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. **When discussing a moral dilemma, others define words and concepts relevant to the dilemma similar to you.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. **In deciding a moral dilemma, it's all right if relevant opinions are suppressed in order to reach agreement.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. **When others argue with you about moral issues, they are less concerned with giving you reasons than with just getting you to agree with them.**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

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Appendix 2: SFPPAI Question Correspondences

Consistency Presupposition is measured by questions 8. (positive) and 6. (negative).

Non-coercion Presupposition is measured by questions 2. (positive) and 3. (negative).

Inclusivity Presupposition is measured by questions 4. (positive) and 9. (negative).

Truth Presupposition is measured by questions 7. (positive) and 10. (negative).

Criticism Presupposition is measured by questions 5. (positive) and 1. (negative).

I. Scoring of SFPPAI

High awareness of formal-pragmatic presupposition awareness is indicated by higher numerical scores ranging from 10 through 60. "Positive" indicators are scored according to their numerical value, and "negative" indicators are reversed in the scoring program.